INFORMATION LITERACY AND INDIGENOUS LIBRARIANSHIP, CHALLENGES BEFORE INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract:

Information literacy is a set of skills required to recognize the need for information, find, evaluate and use of generated information in legal, economic, cultural and ethical manner. To achieve information literacy an individual should have critical evaluation abilities and also need to acquire required skills of handling latest information technology in information seeking process. Indigenous librarianship is a professionalism which required patriotic professionals to protect knowledge of aboriginal peoples of the country. Implementation of information literacy through the indigenous librarianship will develop the local, national and international bibliography. This paper focused on the importance of librarianship in implementation and growth of information literacy as well as the possible problems or challenges need to be faced by the information professionals in society.
Keywords: Information literacy, Indigenous librarianship; Indigenous knowledge; Information professionals; Literacy standards.

1. Introduction

Revolution in ICT leads to knowledge explosion on the web which affects on selection of right information from the end users is one side, and creation of new information in different forms around the world is another, which causes availability of huge amount of information over the web will create the confusion among the

information seekers, for removing this kind of confusion we need proper information literacy to information seekers as well information providers. The word information literacy itself says that make the end users as well as information professionals as literate about the information which means both the users and information providers should have the skill of acquiring available information in different resources. Before discussing information literacy we should know the proper meaning of literacy, a person who has the ability of reading, writing, interpreting the information in the society. Moreover, we can see the literacy into different perspectives viz. educational literacy, cultural literacy, computer literacy, Mobile phone literacy and information literacy. Now we can easily conclude that information literacy means it is acquired knowledge about the availability of information in different resources similarly having the ability to reproduce the new information by studying the available information.

Before knowing the meaning of Information literacy we should aware the meaning of the words information and knowledge because most the time people assume that both are synonyms but some point of view these words gives their own meaning in different context the word information means it is a set of data or facts or figures in the same way the knowledge is the bundle of information or circle of information. To know the proper meaning of these two terms we need to seek the help of different expert's definitions. **C.S. Perice (1958)** says that "Knowledge is structured and also organized information and it will develop inside the cognitive heritage of an individual."

Wersig and Neveling (1975) define it as "Information is a set of significant signs that has the ability to create new knowledge and the phenomena of information are characterized between the sender and receiver of the message in the communication process. Hence the concept of information built on the origin and end of the communication process."

There are many definitions of Information literacy some of the well-known definitions about Information literacy are **American Library Association (1989)** define that : "as an information literate must have the ability to recognize that when the information is needed and also need the ability of locate, evaluate and use of generated information efficiently and effectively." **Webber and Johnston**

(2003) argue that "Information literacy is the adaptation of proper information behavior to locate the information by channel or medium, which is well filtered and properly organized to a wise use of information society." **Bundy, (2004)** defines that "Information literacy is an understanding of skills which are gained in the educational settings by an individual effort.

2. Concept of IL

The concept of information literacy was first defined by Paul Zurkowski in 1974. He argued that "Peoples trained in the application of information resources to their work can call as information literate. They will learn some skills and techniques for utilizing the wide range of information tools as primary sources in moulding information –to resolve their problems." In his definitions, he explores that information resources will be applying in the working environment to get required information for this he has to acquire some skills to utilize the generated and available information to resolve his problems.

For boosting the definition in the year 1976 **Lee Burchinal(1976)** presented a paper at Texas A &M University library's symposium which considered the future of organizing knowledge: " As an information literate has to acquire skills to locate, evaluate and use information to resolve his problems and for make decision making effectively and efficiently." Burchinal's definition argues that certain set of skill are needed to locate and use of information to resolve his problems and to take a decision and to an effective and efficient use of available resources.

One more research by **Robert Taylor** (1977) introduced a new concept for Information which contains certain set of elements they are

- Information literacy is the aid to many problems by acquiring proper facts and information.
- It is a vast knowledge of information resources.
- It is continues informing process.
- Set of strategies required to an acquisition of information.

In the starting of 1990's ALA proposed a meaning for information literacy which has widely accepted around the world, that clearly mentioned that in the information literacy movement

114

information literacy is being considered as part of the wider literacy continuum, and the librarian is evaluating their role in the movement. The Community of Academic librarians further specified the concept of information literacy in its publication of ACRL's "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education in the year 2000 and the task force of ALA for Information literacy and technology working for adapting these competency skills to higher education.

3. Information Literacy Standards

Information is available through various media including graphical, aural, and textual. Increasingly information will come unfiltered which leads to lot challenges in the workplace, in life, in studies for this cause we need a certain set of standards to evaluate, understand and use of available information in ethical and legal manner. **The Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework** defined six information literacy standards they are.

- **Standard One**: the ability to recognizing an information need and determining the nature and extent of information need.

- **Standard Two**: the ability to finding needed information efficiently and effectively.

- **Standard Three**: the ability of critical evaluation of acquired information and information seeking process

- **Standard Four**: as information literate person should have the ability to manage the acquired information.

- **Standard Five:** utilization of acquired information for generating the new concept and for new understandings.

- **Standard Six:** use of acquired or generate information for understanding and use in ethical, cultural, economic and legal manner.

4. IL by Indigenous librarianship

Indigenous librarianship is an important concept which unites the disciplines of librarianship with the indigenous approach to knowledge, theory, and methodology. The field of indigenous librarianship is rooted in long-standing established practices which establish the new arena for international scholarship and it employs

the indigenous people to create, transmit and preserve the knowledge. According to **Webster, K** (2005), Indigenous librarianship has a developing bibliography of indigenous knowledge of local, national, and international professional associations devoted to its growth. In the world we can see a different culture, different language speaking peoples with their own traditional practices and different diversity of life as per the UN(United Nations) estimation there are more than 5000 different cultures are exist around the world and more than 370 individuals belonging to different culture living in the 70 countries. Some of the following statements strongly recommend for having indigenous librarianship to serve indigenous users.

1. **To bridge the gap of digital divide**: librarians play an important role in bridging the gap between the haves and have not's means even today many of the indigenous group have not basic needs to access their required information.

2. **To serve the economically marginalized peoples**: The Indigenous group is categorized under the marginalized group in their respective states or countries for this reason indigenous librarianship are required to serve indigenous groups.

3. **To remove the racial discrimination**: Most of the indigenous are recognized as socially, educationally backward hence to serve this group we need the indigenous librarianship.

4. **To protect their rights economic, social and cultural property**: librarian is the in-house expert who plays immense role in communicating between the different class of peoples similarly he will gather the information from difference sources for particular groups

5. **To bridge the gap between the different cultures**: By studying different cultural information librarian can create awareness between other cultured peoples through information literacy.

6. **To serve the information about their culture or their identity**: as an in-house expert information professional can build awareness among the different indigenous peoples by providing information about their cultural identity.

7. **To provide community training programs:** Nowadays the role librarian is changing because he is not only a librarian he is also a trainer, a teacher by providing the orientation, seminar, workshop he will create the awareness among the different communities.

8. **To archive and organize Indigenous knowledge:** Through indigenous librarianship, we can collect, preserve and organize the traditional, vocal, folk knowledge of Indigenous peoples and also many of the international bodies and organization like UN, IFLA assert the importance of preserve the indigenous knowledge of the respective countries.

9. **To build a research organization:** The fifth law of library science says that library is a growing organism means by collecting the resources about indigenous knowledge and peoples will lead to evolution of new research disciplines.

10. **To self-governance of Indigenous knowledge:** The concept of libraries is getting change as community information centre, knowledge centre; special libraries by acquiring the indigenous knowledge libraries became a governing body by having library acts for indigenous intellectual and cultural property·of the community.

11. **To build cultural heritage:** Indigenous knowledge is available virtually like songs, dances, rituals, stories, ceremonies, music, games, medicinal practices hence this knowledge should capture and preserve with new technology for the future.

5. Initiatives for Indigenous Librarianship

In the year of 1999, there was a gathering of indigenous librarianship convened by Maori in Auckland, New Zealand held to discussing the significant issues facing in libraries and institutions that care for indigenous and cultural information. The Second forum held in September 2001 in Jokkmokk, Sweden, and third forum planned for 2003 in the USA. These international forums bring together indigenous librarianship around the world and build unanimity on the matters of mutual concern.

Some of the major international indigenous library initiatives working for improving the indigenous librarianship within their country they are.

1. Indigenous collections and libraries-Canada
   - Canadian Directory of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit library collection(University of Saskatchewan)
   - Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Resource center.
   - First Nations University of Canada(University of Regina)
   - Xwi7xwa library(University of British Columbia)

2. Indigenous collections and libraries -United States
   - Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center Library and Archives (Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation): It has the collection of 20th century related to history and culture of indigenous peoples of North America.
   - National Indian Law Library (NILL)(Native American Rights Fund): It is a public law library established to federal Indian and tribal law.
   - American Indian Resource Center (AIRC): It established to the improvement of American Indian students by conducting student centered programs.
   - Huntington Park library: This library has collections of arts, language, literature, bibliographies, biographies education, federal Indian laws, and tribal laws.
   - Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA): Established for protecting the native arts.

3. Aboriginal Library Catalogues and Collections-Australia

   - Mura: It established to serve Australian Torres Islander people through the collection of print, media and photography materials.

6. Challenges

There are many case studies and research are carried out to find out the problems and challenges for building the indigenous librarianship in around the world one of the notable projects is

Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) 2014 and Public Library and Technology Access Survey 2011-12 have found some of the major problems and challenges in implementing indigenous library services and information literacy around the world they are as below.

1. **Lacks of funding resources:** To provide indigenous library service it required lot financial assistance from the government of respective state/countries.

2. **Infrastructure:** One of the major problems to develop the indigenous libraries is infrastructure which includes transport, ICT's, library buildings etc.

3. **Native initiatives:** There are few International bodies are taken the initiatives to develop and disseminate the indigenous library services for native speaking communities which is one of the major obstacles to developing indigenous library service

4. **Far from the mainstream:** They serve geographically diverse areas, some of which are as large as states. Many are located in remote areas where access to training and resources including many facilities like transport, communication, and the internet are not easily available.

5. **Lacks of professionalism:** For providing indigenous library services we need well known, native speaking community professionals because most of the indigenous communities live in the remote area from the society hence to reach and for providing the services we need patriotic professionals.

6. **ICT skills:** Evolution of communication technology create a digital divide among the communities which is the major obstacle in promoting information literacy among the indigenous peoples.

7. **Government support:** To promote information literacy and indigenous library services it requires lot supports in terms of financial, legal from the respective government of the countries without this support no individual can provide this services.

8. **Protocol:** It is a living legal document for every activity like institutes, organizational bodies to lead, to provide, to conduct, to promote any activities in the year of 1995 the first protocol for indigenous librarianship has published and it got revised in 2005.

9. **Literacy:** Low literacy rate is important challenges among the aboriginal communities for the cause of knowing their own cultural identity to recognise their own communities they required a certain set of skill for this reason to develop that skills it required literacy in the indigenous group.

7. Conclusion

Information literacy is also a major pre-requisite for every developing society like economic and social factors likewise for the development of an individual depends on information, to survive in the society. For the promotion of IL the Information professionals playing a vital role as an in-house expert in an institutes or organization by the bridge the gap between digital divide among the peoples. To make aware of the availability of information from different resources information professionals need to attain some important skills to disseminate the information to user end. In the present society, we can observe many challenges as discussed in this article with all these problems information professionals are creating awareness of information literacy through the indigenous librarian in the society. The real tasks of the librarian in practice of information literacy by developing and practice of critical librarianship a theoretically informed praxis. We can no longer be seen the libraries as a value-neutral cultural center and also librarian as a value-neutral information provider. Librarian always engaged with the translation of organized knowledge to the information seekers to make them engage with that knowledge. This struggling with meaning is crucial to information literacy, literacy education and for librarianship to realize the potential inherent in information literacy, libraries and librarians is necessary to engage with this struggle to aligning the value to information literacy by day-to-day work of libraries.

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